Personal Possession

INTERPRETATION OF THE PAULETTE

p.59 Tapie has a very clear picture of the benefits and drawbacks to the paulette. On the positive side, he is aware of the financial benefits which went to the crown, and also the alliance that was formed with the bourgeoisie and the crown, in terms of mutual need. Even though the king had given up the power to pick all of his officers, but as he wisely notes, that if they did not go to members of the bourgeoisie the offices would have fallen to to the great nobles. He argues that instead of weakening the hand of the power of the king to exert, just the opposite was true.

On the negative side, Tapie points out the drawbacks. He claims it was prejudicial to royal authority. It made officeholding a private matter where the king had little right to interfere, in addition to the loss of flexibility which tended to solidify (in a bad sense) the royal administration. Offices were in the hands of the same families and this tended to create a new type of feudal order.

73 An attempt to curb the sale of offices in 1611 was tried and eventually given up by the monarchy. The regent wanted to draw up a new lease on offices that were much more favorable to the financial needs of the crown. They also want to limit the transfer of offices between sons and sons-in-law of the officeholder. However, the reaction of the officeholders was so strong that the plans were withdrawn for fear of antagonizing this class at a time when Marie could use all support she could muster.

163-63 In speaking of the Assembly of Notables held in 1627, Tapie points out that when it came time for Richelieu to speak and outline the various problems facing France and reform proposals, nothing was mentioned about venality or the paulette, although, according to Tapie, this reform was one of the most vital for the future of France. What proved to be the reason? Mousnier suggests that war was imminent and the treasury was in its chronically poor state, thus making it impossible to speak of a reform that ambitious. Tapie agrees with the financial side of the issue but does not think much of the imminent war issue.

p.186 After the Peace of La Rochelle, Richelieu drew up a memorandum dated 13 Jan. 1629 in which he proposed a program of reform for France. One of the points he mentioned was the abolishment of the paulette. Obviously Richelieu had a change of heart since 1627. Also, another of his points called for the curbing of the Parlement of Paris.

205-6 Tapie mentions that both Marillac and Richelieu were in favor of abolishing the paulette in 1630. However the was made that impossible. Effiat, the superintendant of finance, called upon officeholders to advance the crown loans amounting to 25% of the value of their appointments. The magistrats protested angerly. A compromise settlement was reached. The paulette would be renewed and there would be a loan provision though not as high as originally requested. The members of the Paris Parlement not only forbade all its officers to contribute, but they enlisted the support of the provincial parlements as well. This situation proved to be quite touchy because judical officers were not dispensing justice. Eventually the resistance collapsed and the Cardinal had weathered a difficult storm.

Paulette

Goubert, L'Ancien Régime. tom 1, société

(1182)

B.N. 8°G. 18274 (2, I)

Attitudes towards Venality & the Paulette

In this volume, there is very little mentioned about the paulette. He does have a section of the parlementaire nobility but he confines himself to the histories of Mayer for Bretagne & Bluche for the 18th cent. Paris Parlement. His comments on the Paris Parlement are rare. He notes there are strong differences in the composition of the Paris Parlement & those in the provinces — that being Paris had many new families while things were more stable & conservative in the local areas. Members in these areas tended to have long standing proofs of nobility. As a result of this lack of evidence on areas outside of Bretagne, Goubert can only speculate. He explains that there is a lack of basic research in this area. However, Goubert does go out on a limb on p. 175 & state that the parlements tended to form a closed nobiliaire caste.

In his second volume, there is more mention of the paulette. He speaks of it (p. 71-72) in rather general terms regarding it provisions, rights, etc. without offering his own opinion on what its effects were on France. Then later when he concentrates on the parlement, more attention is given to the paulette. He adopts (p. 74) the view of Mousnier that one of the tools at the disposal of the monarchy in breaking the resistance of the Parlement was the threat of non-renewal of the provisions in the policy, namely, hereditary rights. But Goubert, perhaps wisely, makes no comment about the ~~instructive~~

purposefully or destructive nature of this controversial royal policy. There are no statements from which he can be ~~pur~~ cornered or stereotyped.

B.N. 4° Lb 19/.5

The Paulette As An Issue At the Assembly

After the paulette had been such a red hot issue during the Estates General & the Assembly of Notables in 1618, it should be interesting to note what place the paulette had in the discussions of this Assembly. As it turns out, the paulette was hardly an issue at all, a secondary one at that. Since Richelieu & the government were orchestrating the whole assembly, that fact the paulette was not raised as an issue for consideration meant that the ~~issue~~ government had been convinced of the need for its continuance. But this ~~way~~ was not always the case. Richelieu, in 1625, had envisioned a project for catagorically ending the sale of financial & judicial offices. But at the Assembly, the only matter brought up for consideration was suppressing the sale of offices of "la maison du roi et pour les charges militaires." It was recommended by the assembly dutifully condemned venality & heredity in offices & ~~conse~~ counseled the king to end these practices if he decided on taking a wide-sweeping reform. Richelieu will also change his view, as seen by his comments in the Testament politique. Petit is not sure herself why the issue of the paulette was not pursued with more vigor. She suggests that the body of members in attendance were officeholders themselves (some of the highest) & therefore they could not expect to be overly favorable to a policy which hurt their pocketbook & general interests. She suggests by is not willing to stand firm on this assumption. She also mentions the financial angle, how could

p.89-90

treasury possibly afford to purchase all of those offices back when the government was already operating in the red.

Petit mentions that the policy to stop the sale of offices which were in the category of maison du roi was included in the Code Michau of 1629. Also, there was a request presented to the king on the occasion of the assembly, in which (p. 217) they requested the abolishment of both venality & the heredity in offices & restating the same used arguments about how these policies had reduced them to a deplorable state & that now is the time the king should make his goodwill known by favoring the nobility. It was an echo from 1614 which the king nor Richelieu cared to hear at the moment. The nobles drew very few benefits from the Assembly & nothing concerning ending the heredity in officeholding.

The members of the sovereign courts also submitted a request about the same time but no mention was made of the paulette. They were interested in the infringements of their prerogatives & privileges (pp. 220-23).

It is obvious that the passions of the past concerning the paulette. As long as Richelieu was content to allow its continuance ~~they~~ there was little chance of its abolishment. The question of the war debts also was a factor. Few cries were ~~heard~~ for reform were heard of the shouts for raison d'état.

B.N. 8° Lb36.3975

Comments on the Paulette

Her views pertain chiefly to the decade 1620-1630, & the use of the paulette as a political & economic weapon. She brings up the new provisions for the paulette
p. 181 cited in Mousnier around the time 1621. All officials would pay a levy equivalent to 5% of the price of their office & in subsequent years it would be reduced to
182 → 1%. With the 5% to start with & the yearly increase between 1621 & 1629, it would cost the officeholders 13%. This was a scheme which would have added a large amount of capital into the coffers of the king. Under the provisions envisioned by the monarchy only the PP's, & procureurs généraux would have been exempted from the payment. Plus, the paulette would only grant the officeholder the official rate at which he was taxed & not the market value which was considerably highly, this was in the case the king wanted control over the vacated offices & was willing to reimbourse the family which held control. This was a change in the original compact & not to the favor of the officeholders.

Obviously there was a howl of protest at which the monarchy threatened to abolish the paulette again if they were not cooperative. On 15 dec 1620, the Paris Parlement adopted a letter of protest. A compromise proved to be the solution. The king went so far as to concede that the declaration of the Conseil du Roy on 22 fev would not be applied to the entire body of higher officials, thus they too became exempt. For the parlement's role, the page of the register for 15 dec would be torn out & obliterated. This meant that the members looked out for their own interests while the lower officers had to pay the forced loan with parlementaire consent. Lublinskaya

draws the conclusion that the Paris Parlement betrayed their junior colleagues & thus lead to a split between the higher strata of French officialdom & intensified their animosities. But the higher rankers with venal offices did not have to pay the forced loans — their reward for cooperation.

In talking about the various revenues coming into the royal treasury (p. 231), Lublinskaya remarks about the rise in the money coming in from the officeholders. These were drawn chiefly from the paulette & thus at the expense of the officers (below parlement who had to pay the forced loan). This sum was seven-times as large in 1622 as it was in 1607, & in 1622 eleven times as large (20 million livres or 40% of the total revenues). Another way of looking at it is that the 1622 amount was equivalent to 2/3 of the revenues for 1607.

Also on p. 293 Lublinskaya mentions that at the Assembly of Notables that the paulette had dropped out as a hot political issue. She feels so because the privileges had been guaranteed them (parlements).

Paulette

Daniel, Histoire de France (1185)

B.N. 4° L35. 120e

Reporting on the Paulette

XII, p.473 This history is almost in the form of a chronical. It reports events on a year-to-year basis giving some coverage to the major events. There is a short paragraph on the paulette. He mentions that the edit of Conseil was published without being verified in the Parlement. This action produced some murmurs but the officers did not raise too much trouble because they were assured heredity in their offices. They submitted to it voluntarily with time. It was only officially enregistered in the Parlement in dec 1665, the king in attendance. That is all ~~th~~ of what is mentioned.

Coverage in vol XIII concerning the estates general & other important Assemblies give only the most basic things. The work is structured in such a way that the author takes pieces from contemporary sources in order to form a patchwork of history. The result is that the author says nothing of an interpretative sort. The historiography of letting the facts speak for themselves with no interference on the part of the author. It is not the sort of thing I am looking for at the moment, especially with regards to the paulette.

8° Z 28960
B.N. ~~4° L 35~~. (1138)

Méthivier, ~~L'Ancien Régime~~. Le Siècle de Louis XIII

Attitudes on the Paulette

Méthivier does not go into the paulette in much detail, but he does confirm the general unfavorable opinion that the paulette was going to have lasting effects on the social classes & the noblesse de robe. Apart from the one sentence (which will be quoted below), the author is basically content to simply explain its various features.

p.22 "En 1604 aussi Sully lève la dernière entrave légale à l'hérédité en créant le droit annuel (taxe de 1/60 de la valeur de la charge) qui supprimait la clause des 'quarante jours' après résignation de l'office et devait avoir d'immenses répercussions sociales par l'ascension de la Robe."

B.N. 8° Z. 28960 (125) Méthivier, L'Ancien Régime.

As with the above book, the author, on pp. 51-52, is more concerned with providing basic information to the reader on the paulette. Thus, his remarks are limited though it can be assumed that he considers the system as an abuse. There is nothing very daring in his remarks. He shows caution in his analysis, which speaks well for the man-